Therefore, while concluding I say that you have given permission to introduce this Bill in the Lok Sabha and that shows that we are happy that it is a good cause. The hon. Members and colleagues who are going to speak will definitely support and help in this good cause. That is my hope.

Hon' Prime Minister is a kind hearted man and he believes in helping others.

It is a coincidence that he happened to be here during discussion on such an important Bill. Therefore, it is fortunate that the Prime Minister of the country is here. I hope that he will definitely tell that it is a good idea and their objective in the Common Minimum Programme. If he announces from his golden voice it will be a great pleasure and we all will be very happy.

Thank you very much, Sir, for giving me this opportunity. I hope that all will support this Bill.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Motion moved :

> "That the Bill to provide for free and compulsory education upto higher secondary level to all children throughout the country and for matters connected therewith, be taken into consideration."

After your compliment to the hon. Prime Minister, I would request the hon. Prime Minister to make his statement.

17.10 hrs.

STATEMENT BY PRIME MINISTER

Debt Relief, Central Plan Assistance, Facilities at Migrant Camps, Infrastructure Development in Relation to the State of Jammu and Kashmir

[English]

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI H.D. DEVE GOWDA): Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, I would like to make the following statement in connection with some of the relief measures that we have taken about Jammu and Kashmir.

Debt relief to small businesses affected by militancy: Hon. Members would kindly recall that on 23rd of July, 1996 I made a Statement in the House relating to certain long term infrastructural projects in the sectors of communication and power in the State of Jammu and Kashmir. Hon. Members would agree with me that tourism, horticulture and handicrafts form the backbone of the economy of Jammu and Kashmir State. Other activities like small scale trade and industry, transport and hotels subserve the tourism sector. This sector was the worst affected because of militancy during the last 6-7 years. Tourist arrivals in the Valley declined from a peak figure of seven lakhs in 1986-87 to almost a trickle during the last few years. This has affected the livelihood of thousands of families deriving sustenance from tourism and related activities. The affected units and individuals who had taken commercial loans from banks have not been able to repay the loans since there was no cash flow and have fallen into debt trap. The State Government have identified that about 31,000 borrowers from the sectors of small scale trade and industry, transport, hotel and houseboat businesses took loans to the extent of Rs. 181.87 crore. During the last six years, there has been hardly any repayment and the interest on these loans itself amounts for another Rs. 212.79 crore. Hon. Members would agree with me that while militancy hindered tourism, loss of tourism led to a great degree of unemployment, and growing of militancy, setting up a vicious circle. Now that the democratic process is being re-established and all efforts being made to restore normalcy, it is necessary to provide some relief to those hapless victims, especially the smaller borrowers. The Government, therefore, proposes to write-off the outstanding loan and interest of all borrowers whose original borrowing is less than or up to Rs. 50,000/-. This would enable these small borrowers to get fresh loans from the banking sector to restart their businesses. As regards the borrowers above Rs. 50,000/-, an Inter-Ministerial Committee is being constituted to look into the questions of a moratorium and rescheduling of their loans, reduction in interest rates, and any other reliefs that could be given.

Special Central Plan Assistance to J and K State for 1996-97 : In view of the precarious resource position of the Jammu and Kashmir State, resulting from militancy, the Central Government has been helping the Jammu and Kashmir State by providing special Central assistance not only to meet a reasonable Annual Plan set up but also to bridge gaps on the non-plan side. As a result of this effort, the State Government's tottering budget has been stabilised during the last three years. Last year, namely, 1995-96, the Parliament passed a balanced budget for the State with built-in Central assistance to meet the non-Plan gap so that the Approved plan outlay of Rs. 1050 crore could be preserved. In view of the fact that the State for the first utilised almost entire plan outlay last year, the outlay for the current year has been fixed again at Rs. 1050 crore. However, even with Central assistance at the level of last year, the State budget during the current year has a deficit of Rs. 352 crore on current account, resulting from additional commitments of the State Government on different accounts.

Unless this resource gap is bridged by a special Central assistance of an equal amount, the State will have no option but to reduce its plan size to Rs. 698.00 crore. Any reduction in Plan outlay at this crucial juncture when the State in on the path to total normalcy, needs to be avoided. Therefore, the Centre has decided to provide a special Central plan assistance of Rs. 352

crore to balance the State budget during the current year so that the entire plan outlay of Rs. 1050 crore can be utilised for development schemes without having to divert any part of it to meet the non-Plan gap.

3. *Improvement of facilities at migrant camps in Jammu :* Hon. Members are aware that 27,000 families of migrants from the Valley are living in Jammu either on their own arrangements or in camps. The facilities provided at 13 camps in Jammu need to be improved. These relate to provision of sanitation facilities like latrines and bathrooms, construction of more one-room tenements, buildings for schools being run in the camps, improvement of drainage facilities in the camps, etc.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE (Bolpur) : Why was a copy of the Statement not made available to us? This is not the system which was being followed earlier. Is it a new system which they are following?

SHRI H.D. DEVE GOWDA : Government would be providing an additional sum of Rs. 6.6 crore to provide the aforementioned additional facilities in the camps to be completed during the current year.

4. *Infrastructure development for tourism in Leh District :* While Kashmir Valley is a traditional tourist destination, new tourist areas have come up in the Districts of Jammu, Udhampur, Leh and Kargil. Leh, in particular, has become an important tourist centre and the State Government already has a plan for refurbishment of the monuments in the District. To give a further fillip to tourism in the area, I propose to allocate an amount of Rs. 2.40 crore for setting up of a Convention/Conference Centre at Leh.

5. *Development of Airport at Kargil :* Hon. Members are aware that Kargil remains cut off from the rest of the State for seven months in a year as a result of the closure of the Srinagar-Kargil Highway in Winter due to heavy snow at Zojila. Government have, therefore, given high priority to the development of an Airport at Kargil at an estimated cost of Rs. 25 crore. The work has already been assigned to the Border Roads Organisation, which would be completing the work of development of the airstrip in two year's time so that Kargil is ready to take regular commercial services. In the meanwhile, Government proposes to have a weekly helicopter service to Kargil in the Winter months instead of the present arrangement of a fortnightly service. Necessary subsidy would be borne by the Government.

6. *Upgradation of Status for Jammu City:* There has been a long-standing demand that Jammu City should be given B-2 status. The threshold population for grant of B-2 status is four lakhs. However, hon. Members are aware that population census could not be held in the State in 1991. The Registrar General of India, however, has estimated the population of Jammu City to be 4.30 lakhs. Therefore, we have decided to upgrade the status of Jammu City to a B-2 City.

7. I hope these measures would go a long way in reviving economic activity in the State. As mentioned by me earlier, travel and tourism trade is of vital importance to the State. Government of India would, in consultation with the State Government, take all necessary measures to provide the requisite infrastructural facilities as well as assistance to individuals and units involved in this trade to ensure that Kashmir gets back its status as a tourists' paradise at the earliest.

8. I would also like to take this opportunity to reiterate the Government's commitment to give maximum autonomy to the State. Once an elected Government is in place, we would hold consultations with them to arrive at a consensus. While doing this, we would also ensure that the aspirations of all regions in the State, namely, Ladakh, Kashmir Valley and Jammu are taken into account.

9. I appeal to all the political parties to help in the restoration of democracy in the State, in the restoration of normalcy and in the economic rejuvenation of the State.

SHRI SATYA PAL JAIN (Chandigarh) : Sir, the hon. Prime Minister has announced certain concessions for the Kashmiri migrants now...*(Interruptions)* There are some migrants who are also in Delhi and other parts of the country. Will they also be getting the benefit of the concessions that he has announced just now? That is the first point...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE : We have to congratulate the Prime Minister for this...*(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Please speak one by one.

SHRI SATYA PAL JAIN : I have got your permission first. In the morning, an issue was raised...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV (Silchar) : If you allow him, we should also be allowed to speak. You should allow one from this side and one from that side ...*(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Please speak one by one.

(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Please listen to me.

(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Normally no question or supplementaries are allowed on the Statement but you may ask a question each.

(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : In this manner, no one will be able to put the question.

(Interruptions)

[English]

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE : Sir, I am not putting any questions as such...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI SATYA PAL JAIN : Mr. Prime Minister, I am seeking two clarifications...*(Interruptions)* The first clarification is whether the concessions that you have announced to the migrants who are in Jammu will be applicable to others in the other parts of the country. There are certain migrants. Most of the migrants are either in Delhi or in other parts of the country. This is the first thing. The other thing that I want to know is whether all these concessions which you have announced to the migrants in Jammu, will the others be getting the benefit or not?

In the morning also an issue was raised. In the whole statement, there is no mention about it. You have not told us any steps that you are going to take to check militancy. In the morning an issue was raised that the American Ambassador has gone there and he is holding meetings with the Kashmiri militants. He is holding meetings with the people in other parts also. People are being murdered. They are being kidnapped. Kindly clarify what steps you are going to take to check the militancy. Otherwise, you will not be able to hold the elections there.

SHRI RAJESH PILOT (Dausa) : Sir, let me congratulate the hon. Prime Minister first. There was something that was missing in his last statement which he made on 23rd July. All the political parties were very much simmering with doubts and they were not very confident. Mr. Prime Minister, I must congratulate you when you have said in your last portion of the statement that you will consult all the political parties, discuss with them and you have also reiterated the Government's commitment about whatever autonomy is required and further said that you would hold consultations with them once an elected Government is in place. It is a very good announcement. That is what our Government was pursing in the last two to three years.

I have only one suggestion to make. It is not a question that I am asking. In Jammu and Kashmir, there is a feeling that those young people in Jammu and Kashmir are not given opportunities to work outside the State in higher posts like in the educational field. This is the feeling they have. So, if the hon. Prime Minister can consider this, it would help them. The educational institutions are not functioning in Jammu and Kashmir. During the time when our Government was there, we had sent them all over the country like Karnataka. Ten to 20 boys were sent. I am thankful to the hon. Prime Minister that when he was the hon. Chief Minister of Karnataka, he helped 15 to 20 boys in getting admission to an Engineering College and Dental College. So, these feelings can be conveyed to the people of Jammu and Kashmir. May I request the hon. Prime Minister to consider sending some people, some special team for higher post and employment in Jammu and Kashmir?

The second point is that conditions in Jammu and Kashmir are not very normal. When we go in for recruitment, we face some difficulties. I must accept the differences between me and my senior colleague and because of that we could not pursue it. I had suggested that two centimetre relaxation in the height of the candidates for recruitment to the paramilitary forces could be considered. Of course, it will not help much because the situation is not good. If the hon. Prime Minister could be kind enough, it would be helpful. The Director-General can give the relaxation. But unfortunately he put it to the Minister and we carried on the struggle between both of us. Ultimately, I could not get through. If the hon. Prime Minister could agree to the suggestion to give concession to the candidates in respect of height of two centimetres, at least many boys can get into the paramilitary forces.

SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV : Please expunge it from the record.

SHRI RAJESH PILOT : Let it go on record. I am only seeking clarifications. The last point is about the detainees. The detainees are there. There are people who are detainees for the last five to ten years. May I request the hon. Prime Minister to constitute a small Committee in the Home Ministry and review all the cases before the election process starts? Sometimes people do get entangled with the law in the process and they are suffering because of this. If the Government can decide it, it will be helpful. Out of the 2500 cases, there are 700 which cannot really escape the angle of law. The others could be considered for a review. I think that will send a very good message to Jammu and Kashmir brethren. I think he will reply to all the points.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : He will reply to all of your questions.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, I wish to congratulate the Prime Minister for his statement. This shows a very positive step taken by this Goverment to bring Kashmir into the national mainstream and some of their long-standing demands have been met. I accept the sincerity with which the Prime Minister has assured that there will be full discussion with the newly elected Government there for grant of necessary autonomy. I am sure, that this Government will continue to try to rectify the mistakes committed by Shri Rajesh Pilot and his seniors. Shri Rajesh Pilot is learning in the hindsight now, from his mistakes.

SHRI RAJESH PILOT : I am playing the role of an opposition.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE : I am sure that there will be cooperation now from Shri Rajesh Pilot and his friends.

SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV : Always.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE : How many will be there with him, I do not know. But this is an occasion

for me to wish him best of everything. But we shall have to put it on record our deep appreciation for the steps that have been taken by the Government. And I am sure, we shall have a new Jammu and Kashmir Government.

SHRI MADHUKAR SARPOTDAR (Mumbai North-West) : Respected Deputy-Speaker, Sir, It is a good development that the hon. Prime Minister of India has announced some schemes for Jammu and Kashmir. I welcome the proposal. But I would like to seek some clarifications from the statement that he made. What will happen to those who are outside Jammu and taking shelter elsewhere all over the country?

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : It has already been asked.

SHRI MADHUKAR SARPOTDAR : What is their fate? The facilities have been provided to the people shifted from Kashmir to Jammu. They are providing them houses with bath room, lavatory and other facilities. Does it mean that they will be asked to remain there permanently? Is there any scheme to shift them back to their original places? This is also a very important issue.

Thirdly, this morning in this house, there was a query about the US people in these places. They are intervening in the affairs of the Jammu and Kashmir, having dialogues with the military personnel etc. Is it fair on the part of a foreign country to have direct contact with them? I would like to know whether the Prime Minister or the External Affairs Minister have given permission to these US officials to have direct contact with these people. In view of this, what is the state of condition prevailing in Jammu and Kashmir?

Lastly, what is the action we are going to take against these extremists? Everyday they are killing persons. The lives of the people staying there have become very miserable. All of us who are staying in this country are worried about the death toll which is taking place there. In view of this, what is the remedy this Government of India is going to take to curb these terrorist activities?

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : One thing is clear that this cannot be turned into a debate.

[Translation]

SHRI SATYA DEO SINGH (Balrampur) : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the announcement made by the Prime Minister about Jammu and Kashmir should be welcomed by all. The concern expressed by the Prime Minister is natural. I request the hon. Prime Minister to pay his attention for a few minutes. You have made an important announcement here about J and K. Earlier also, you had announced an economic package in the Rajya Sabha also in which you promised an allocation of Rs. 2,500 crores for laying a new railway line in J and K. To-day, you announced both a political as well as an economic package. I would like to elicit some information about the economic package. The economic package is intended to eliminate terrorism in the State of J and K, and we welcome it. The terrorism in the State not only destroyed the tourism industry but also uprooted and displaced lakhs of people of Kashmiri origin whose only fault was that. They were in minority.

[English]

The Hindus are in minority in the valley of Jammu and Kashmir...*(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Please let him complete.

SHRI SATYA DEO SINGH : If I am speaking anything wrong you can stand and interrupt me...*(Interruptions)* But why do you interrogate?

[Translation]

You please listen. Why do you stand in between?

[English]

You are treading on a very thin ice....*(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

The sensitivity exhibited by them shows how serious the issue is. If these people do not belong to Kashmir, is it not the duty of the Government to resettle them there and announce some economic package for them also. The Prime Minister must pay attention to these peple who have become refugees in their own country. The PM must do something concrete for them and before dwelling on tourism, I would express my agreement with Sarpotdarji. In the name of autonomy, some political package is being announced for the Kashmir Valley.

[English]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Please conclude.

(Interruptions)

SHRI SATYA DEO SINGH : Why are you so excited ...*(Interruptions)*

I am concluding, Sir. But this is very unfortunate on the part of a very senior Minister who does not want to listen on a very sensitive issue concerning the national integration...*(Interruptions)*...You are trying to integrate the Jammu and Kashmir...*(Interruptions)*...What is wrong in that?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRI SRIKANTA JENA): We have to go to the other House also.

SHRI SATYA DEO SINGH : All right. So, what?

SHRI SRIKANTA JENA : It has not happened this way, before.

SHRI SATYA DEO SINGH : It has not happened but it is being allowed now.

You from these Benches were trying to ask the questions on the statements made by the Ministers ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI SRIKANTA JENA : What are you talking? ...*(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

SHRI SATYA DEO SINGH : I welcome your decision to discuss the autonomy issue with the newly elected MLAs of J and K before taking the final decision thereon. But there should be an open discussion and that also with an open wind. I am not talking of propriety because this Government has given a go by to it ....*(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Mr. Satya Deo Singh, please conclude.

SHRI SATYA DEO SINGH : Yes Sir.

[Translation]

Sir, my submission is that you must take note of all the points raised here and the entire state of J and K must get the benefit of your goodwill.

[English]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Yes, Mr. Prime Minister.

SHRI H.D. DEVE GOWDA : Hon. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, the suggestions of the hon. Members will be taken note of.

Shri Rajesh Pilot, who is the former Internal Security Minister and who was the incharge of Kashmir Affairs for some time, has given certain suggestions and the Government is prepared to consider all those suggestions.

One more thing about the recent killings by the militants. It is a little bit on the higher side. After the Parliamentary Elections in Jammu and Kashmir are over, again the militants have been encouraged by our neighbours, and who are those neighbours, there is no need for me to express in this august House - the whole world knows it.

Sir, I would like to assure this august House that the Government will take all necessary stern action to put down these militants and see that the Assembly Elections are going to be held with free and fairness ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Please sit down. Do not interrupt.

Mr. Prime Minister, there was a reference regarding the American Ambassador.

SHRI H.D. DEVE GOWDA : Sir, I will just mention this because I have to go the the other House also.

This thing happened today morning when I was not here. It is not the question of a mere Statement. The previous Government had taken a decision to provide more transparency so far as the Affairs of the Kashmir is concerned. I have tried to get the information from the Governor of Jammu and Kashmir after this matter was discussed in the House and merely, 112 foreign diplomats have been allowed to go the Kashmir out of which there were 67 foreign parliamentarians, previously in their regime...*(Interruptions)* And, this has been permitted including the ambassadors, parliamentary delegations and Senate Members of various countries. The very object is that the Government of India does not want to keep anything secret. They want more transparency and that is why the decision was taken by the previous Government. I do not find fault with the decision of the previous Government.

One of the issues raised today in this House is that the Ambassador has gone to Srinagar and has met so many people. It was with the prior permission of the Home Minister and the External Affairs Ministry that he has gone there. It was informed to the Governor and on the basis of that he is meeting those people. Apart from that there is nothing to suppress the information in this House. He has taken the permission of the Home Ministry and the Ministry of External Affairs to go there. It was informed to the Governor. He is also going to meet the Governor and the Chief Secretary tomorrow along with other officials. In the presence of the Chief Secretary he has a programme to meet even one or two Army Officers.

The other thing is, he is meeting some leaders of political parties, including Dr. Farooq Abdullah. Today he has met some of the other political party leaders and he is going to meet them tomorrow also. This was informed earlier. So, there is nothing new in this.

SHRI P.R. DASMUNSI (Howrah) : I thoroughly disagree. How can the Home Minister allow the US Ambassador to meet Army Officers? How can the Home Minister decide about it?

SHRI MADHUKAR SARPOTDAR : The Home Minister was very much present in the House this morning. But he did not disclose this fact to the House.

SHRI H.D. DEVE GOWDA : I will tell you that I have to go to the other House. Otherwise I would have read out the entire statement about whom the 112 foreign dignitaries, including Ambassadors, have met in the last four years, datewise and with whose permission. All these things have been given by the Home Ministry. It is with me. All these things are with me ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Let this not become a debate.

SHRI RAJESH PILOT : That is not the point. We totally agree with the hon. Prime Minister.

SHRI SRIKANTA JENA : On this issue we have already given a notice that we would make a detailed statement. The hon. Members may appreciate that the Prime Minister has to go to the other House. The detailed statement is ready and we can read out the statement and on the basis of that you can make submissions.

SHRI H.D. DEVE GOWDA : There is nothing new.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : We can come back to the discussion on the Private Members' Bills. Shri Dwaraka Nath Das to speak.

SHRI G.L. KANAUJIA (Kheri) : It is a very serious matter, Sir. Foreigners are coming and meeting our officials.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : The Government is making a statement. Afterwards if there is anything, let us see.

SHRI G.L. KANAUJIA : We should be given a copy of the statement.

SHRI SRIKANTA JENA : If you permit me I can make the statement now; or else after the Private Members' Business is over.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : He is ready with the statement.

SHRI G.L. KANAUJIA : It is a very important matter because foreigners are coming and meeting our political leaders inside our country. It is a breach of trust. If I go to America and meet one of the leaders of their political party, will they allow me to do so?...*(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : I am sorry, I am not able to listen to anyone. If so many people speak, I will not be able to follow anyone.

SHRI RAMESH CHENNITHALA (Kottayam) : It is the right of every Member in this august House to participate in the discussions on Private Members' Bills and Resolutions. Already a Bill has been introduced and the discussion on that is underway. That should be resumed. So, please take up the discussion on Private Member's Business.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : That is why I have already called out the name of Shri Dwaraka Nath Das. Let him speak, please. The statement will be made after the Private Member's Business is over.

17.40 hrs.

COMPULSORY EDUCATION BILL

[English]

SHRI DWARAKA NATH DAS (Karimganj) : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, at the very outset, I should give credit to Dr. T. Subbarami Reddy for introducing such a good Bill.

'Compulsory education' is a term hardly relevant - or, should I say applicable? - to India. Of course, the Bill is for compulsory up to the higher secondary level. This Bill, so far as my idea goes, is at a very advanced stage. We should look back at the level of primary education in the country. At the primary level, a large number of children are being admitted in the schools and after two or three years, they leave the school for ever. That is the position. A country with a population of 94 crores should have adequate educational facilities. But the Government's efforts seem to be not much till today.

Of course, it is not relevant but still I have to say that adult education or what is called, 'total literacy programme' is simply an eye wash. It does educate none but it is simply a waste of money. I have seen in my district that this 'total literacy programme' is a failure and wastage of money on the part of the Government.

For the same course of study, there are several kinds of schools. For example, there are the Central Schools, common public schools, missionary schools, Government sponsored Navodaya Vidyalayas and so on and so forth. There is also a gradation of such schools. The upper class and the upper-middle class people are bent upon getting wards admitted in the high grade schools. I do not understand why these upper class and upper-middle class people are bent upon getting their wards admitted in these high grade schools. It seems as if the Government wants to create several classes of people - high, low and middle - through the so-called educational system amongst its citizens.

Compulsory education, particularly in this class-ridden society of India, is a fantasy. Till today, forty per cent of the people are living below the poverty line. Without enhancing or raising the standard of living of the peasantry and the unorganised labour class, how can you expect to have compulsory education in the country? It is impossible. So, first of all, we should look into and raise the standard of living of the peasantry and the labour class including unorganised labour.

Only then can we talk about compulsory education. Now, so far as the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe people are concerrned, I think, till today they are the oppressed people. I think the literacy rate among the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe men is about fifteen per cent and as regards women are concerned, it is below ten per cent. So, how can you think of giving compulsory and free education to children? It is impossible.

So, my suggestion is that we should raise the standard of life of SC/ST people. There should be some